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Navy & Marine Corps Medical News (MEDNEWS)
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This service distributes news and information to Sailors and Marines, their families, civilian employees, and retired Navy and Marine Corps families. Further dissemination of this e-mail is encouraged.
Headlines this week include:

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Headline: Families Give Gifts of Life in the Shadow Of Death
Okinawa-There is no solace for the tragedy of losing a loved one, especially a child, but two military families have found a way to begin to heal their wounds through their selfless acts of kindness to six Japanese citizens.

Within in the span of two days, a team of Japanese organ transplant physicians and technicians came to U.S. Naval Hospital (USNH) Okinawa in response to these families' wishes to have their children live on in others.

On Feb. 27, four-month-old Joshua Cantu, son of PN2 John and Keiko Cantu, was discovered lifeless in his crib. After numerous rescue attempts on the way to and in the emergency room, Joshua was pronounced dead.

That evening, Joshua's corneas were implanted in two Okinawans, a 31-year-old man and an 85-year-old woman.

"This just seemed like the right thing to do," said Cantu. "By donating Joshua's organs, we feel like we made something good out of this terrible situation."

Days later, on Mar. 1, ten-year-old Lavelle King, son of Air Force SSGT Louis and Yvette King, was pronounced brain dead after falling from a bunk bed and striking his head.

Lavelle's corneas are now the gift of sight to a 32-year-old man and a 66-year-old woman, both Okinawans. His kidneys were implanted in a nine-year-old girl from Tokyo

and a 12-year-old boy from Fukuoda.

"We are very grateful," said Dr. Nobuyuki Nakamura, staff urologist at Chubu Hospital, Okinawa and coordinator for the Okinawa Transplant Information Center.

By HMCN (SW) Michael C. Carr, USNH Okinawa

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Headline: Double-Dose Prescription May Prevent Pregnancy

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced recently that some oral contraceptives are safe and effective for use as an emergency contraceptive, or "morning after," pill.

Oral contraceptives that contain estrogen and progestin have been prescribed as an effective pregnancy preventative since 1960. Because of their availability, effectiveness and ease of use, the FDA is informing the public that taking an increased dose of the contraceptive within 72 hours of intercourse, and then another dose 12 hours later, decreases the odds of getting pregnant by up to 75 percent.

The active drugs in these contraceptives have been used for decades to prevent pregnancy in women who have unprotected intercourse as a result of rape, contraceptive failure, or lack of planning.

The emergency contraceptive dose is not effective if the woman is already pregnant. It is for emergency use only and should not be used as a regular method of birth control. Women who do not wish to become pregnant should consult their health care providers regarding the best birth control method for them.

Military or civilian health care providers can provide more information about emergency contraceptive pills.

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Headline: Groton Opens One-Stop Primary Care Center

Groton, CT-The new Primary Care Center (PCC) at Naval Hospital (NH) Groton is up and running.

The opening of the PCC, which will offer one-stop health care for many Naval Submarine Base New London families, was in planning for many months.

What makes the PCC unique is patients no longer have to go to separate clinics for each of their health care needs. Families are assigned to one of the multi-skilled health care teams. The teams are made up of family practice physicians, pediatricians, general medical officers, internal medicine specialists, nurse practitioners, nurses, and corpsmen.

Frances G. Hirschowitz, the wife of an active duty Sailor, was one of the first satisfied customers. Before the PCC was set up, she would have to make multiple appointments, one for each malady. Now, she's able to make one appointment for all.

"I couldn't believe it when one physician was able to see me for all my needs," she said.

In addition to efficient care, the center also gives

the beneficiaries a chance to build a sound patient and health care provider relationship since they see one physician for most of their needs.

The center is still in its "sea trials" phase, experiencing minor growing pains, but generally it's getting high marks from staff and patients.

"I think the majority of the patients like the new system. The people enrolled in the program have greater access to care. Once all the little glitches are worked out, this is going to be super," said HN Tisha Thompson, who works in the center.

Once the program is perfected and a routine set for active duty families, center services will expand to include retirees and other beneficiaries.

By Kimberly Allen, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery

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Headline: Okinawa Medics Hold "Dress Rehearsal" For Combat

Okinawa-The "casualties" came in waves, arriving in CH-46D "Sea Knight" helicopters. As quickly as one helicopter landed, another one arrived with its load of 15 "injured" Marines and Sailors.

The flow of casualties seemed endless, with simulated injuries ranging from lacerations to sucking chest wounds. Carrying the flood of casualties from the landing zone by stretcher, corpsmen rushed to triage their patients- that is, determine the condition, severity and extent of the wound.

While it was just a drill, a "dress rehearsal" for the real thing, and in the words of Company C, 3rd Medical Battalion, 3rd Forces Service Support Group Commander LT Jeffrey Walker, a "fun and challenging way to cap off a 10-day field exercise," the seriousness of the drill wasn't lost on the staff.

The field hospital, made of connecting tents hidden beneath camouflage netting, came equipped with X-ray machines, pharmacy, laboratory, dental clinic, and operating room. When put into full use, it is capable of treating 50 to 100 patients, said HM1 Karl Matous of the company.

As part of the exercise, Company C also worked to put together their hospital, and had to determine what supplies came in the multitude of boxes, crates and canisters of various shapes and size that were delivered with their tents.

Next came classes on field sanitation and sterilization, and lessons on how to use the different pieces of equipment. And finally, the Sailors put their new skills to use during the mass casualty drill.

"This exercise was a shakedown for Sailors who will be going on upcoming deployments, such as the Freedom Banner and Tandem Thrust exercises, where they will provide medical support," said Walters.

By CPL Jason Dequenne, Marine Corps Base Camp Butler, Okinawa

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Headline: Pensacola "Walk-To" Clinic Opens For Students

Pensacola, FL-The Navy has seen the breaking of an old paradigm with the official opening of its newest combination medical and dental clinics in Pensacola.

Clinics at some bases often aren't located near where patients are - especially younger, new Sailors who may not have their own transportation. But in the case of this new Pensacola clinic, it was planned and built for the convenience of the new Sailor.

The combination clinic was built in the center of the Naval Air Technical Training Center (NATTC) campus so that the young student-Sailor can easily walk to get dental and medical care.

The staff of 40 health care providers will care for about 5,000 students and NATTC staff. Before the clinic opened, students had to travel to a health care facility more than a mile away.

By Rod Duren, Naval Hospital Pensacola, FL

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Headline: Advice From Space: Don't Sleep on the Wall

Orbiting Earth--CAPT Jerry Linenger, MC, orbiting Earth aboard the space station Mir, has a few tips for his earthbound son.

Don't sleep on the wall.

Don't eat your food upside down above the table.

Don't spit your toothpaste into your towel.

Linenger shares these suggestions and other observations about life in space with his toddler son John in letters he is sharing with the world via the Internet.

Many of his letters discuss life aboard Mir, such as the experiments the crew is working on and what it's like exercising on a treadmill in space, but they also include some of Linenger's feelings about being a "spaceman."

"Space is a frontier! And I'm out here exploring. For five months! What a privilege," wrote the Navy physician in his first letter.

Linenger has been orbiting in Mir since January. He is scheduled to return to Earth in May.

Linenger's letters and other information about his and Mir's mission can be read on the Shuttle-Mir homepage on the Internet at <http://shuttle-mir.nasa.gov/>.

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Headline: Landing Force Medical Staff Planner Course

Naval Hospital Charleston, SC, is sponsoring a Landing Force Medical Staff Planner (LFMSP) Course Apr. 7-11.

The course is open to active duty military, E-6 through O-4, who serve at activities such as fleet hospitals, Fleet Marine Force units and medical mobilization augmentation readiness teams.

The LFMSP course provides an introduction to planning

various aspects of medical support for amphibious operations.

There is no cost associated with the course; however your command must pay for travel and lodging.

Deadline for registration is Apr. 4.

For more information about the course or to register, contact HM2(FMF) Troy Ferrie at (803) 743-7389/90, DSN 563-7389/90, fax (803) 743-7387, or e-mail chr1can@chr10.med.navy.mil.

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Headline: TRICARE Question and Answer

Question: How do TRICARE Service Centers assist beneficiaries?

Answer: TRICARE Service Centers are staffed by health care professionals who are there to help beneficiaries get the service that they need. These professionals include:

-- Health Care Finders, who will make appointments and help find specialists when you need them. They also provide names of doctors participating in the TRICARE Extra network, and will help locate doctors who accept Medicare payments for service.

-- Beneficiary Services Representatives, who will help explain the options available to you and assist in your choice of the program that suits you best. They can enroll you in TRICARE Prime, assist with the selection of a primary care manager, and help resolve any billing problems.

TRICARE Service Centers also send beneficiaries TRICARE information packages describing the features of each of the options and what alternatives are available for each beneficiary category.

Additional information on TRICARE is available on the Department of Defense (Health Affairs) homepage on the World Wide Web. The address is [http://\(slash\)www.ha.osd.mil](http://(slash)www.ha.osd.mil).

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Headline: Healthwatch: Do You Have A Drinking Problem?

"The Right Spirit" Alcohol Abuse Prevention and Deglamorization Campaign was launched in 1996 by the Chief Naval Operations to emphasize the importance of educating everyone, from seaman to admiral, about the dangers of alcohol.

One of the tools of "Right Spirit" is a drinking self-assessment questionnaire. Take a few moments to answer the questions below.

1. Have you had any problems as a result of your drinking (family, legal, etc.)?
2. Are you increasing the amount or frequency of your drinking?
3. Do you drink to relieve stress, overcome fear, forget problems?
4. Do you behave differently (out of character) when drinking?

5. Have you ever tried to hide your drinking from others (family, friends, co-workers)?

6. Do you feel that your productivity, efficiency or motivation is decreasing?

7. Have you lost time from work due to drinking?

8. Have you lied about, covered up for or made excuses about your drinking?

9. Do you worry, feel guilty, or get angry because of your drinking?

10. Do you deny or refuse to discuss your drinking?

If you answered YES to any of the questions above, you may have an alcohol problem. Your command Drug and Alcohol Program Advisor (DAPA), chaplain or health care provider can help.

You can also check your local directory for a listing of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) or Al-Anon/Alateen.

By Kim Allen, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery and Jessica Harding, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery

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Note: April is National Alcohol Awareness Month. April 4-6 is alcohol free weekend. This month and weekend focuses attention on America's number one, but often overlooked drug problem - alcoholism.

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Feedback and comments are welcome. Story submissions are encouraged. Contact Jan Davis, MEDNEWS editor, at e-mail mednews@bms200.med.navy.mil, telephone 202/762-3223 (DSN 762-3223), or fax 202/762-3224.

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